

Utu Utu Gwaitu Tribe of the Benton Rancheria

Elected Officials:



Chairman: Billie G. (Jake) Saulque
Vice Chairperson: Adora L. Saulque
(Elections are staggered, with two-year terms)

Environmental Technician: Honovaa Lewis

Land Base: 160 acres in trust, 2.5 other acres

Primary Economy: Tourism

Population and Poverty (2010 Census): 76 residents live on the Reservation; 20.5% live in poverty.

Educational Attainment (of Persons over 25): 32.3% of residents have at least a high school diploma; 0% have a bachelor's or graduate degree.

EPA Funding (2014-2015)

GAP	\$56,000
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Benton Reservation

The Utu Utu Gwaitu Paiute are a small, non-gaming Tribe whose traditional homelands straddle the California-Nevada border on the eastern side of the southern Sierra Nevada Mountains. The reservation is located in the high desert of Mono County, about 60 miles east of Yosemite National Park and about 10 miles from the Nevada border along U.S. Route 6. The reservation is also accessed from U.S. Route 20. During particularly severe winters, both access roads to the reservation may be temporarily closed. Medical services and grocery stores are available in Bishop, approximately 35 miles away. Business owners and residents wishing to make major purchases frequently travel to Reno, Nevada, which is approximately 3 ½ highway hours from the reservation.

Economic Development

The Chairman states that the vision of the Benton Economic Development Corporation is to create green jobs for tribal members. Currently, the corporation owns Benton Station, a gas station, grocery, and cafe at the northwest corner of Highway 6 and Highway 120.



Energy Development

In FY10, the Tribe received a \$200,000 Department of Energy grant to study the potential to generate renewable energy from geothermal resources that may be located under Tribal lands.

GAP

FY15 is the Tribe's fourth year with a GAP grant. Under GAP, the Tribe employs a full-time Environmental Technician. In FY15, the Tribe will develop an EPA/Tribal Environmental Plan and develop a recycling program. The Environmental Technician will also attend trainings to increase proficiency in using computers and office-based software.

Contact: Damian Willson, 415-972-3453

Solid Waste

The Tribe has developed a draft integrated solid waste management plan and is working to revise and finalize it in FY15. Residents are self-hauling their trash to one of three dumpsters. The dumpsters are emptied by a commercial hauler. The Tribe is exploring building a transfer station and developing a recycling program. Additionally, the Tribe is considering the development of environmental codes, including a solid waste and dumping ordinance.

Contact: Jenny Stephenson, 415-972-3453

Drinking Water and Groundwater

Current ETT Score (10/2014): 0 Points

Water service to 90 customers is provided by the Tribe's community system, while wastewater is handled by septic tanks. The Tribe's drinking water system has experienced spikes in arsenic levels, exceeding MCLs under SDWA. IHS-funded Infrastructure improvements include individual reverse osmosis filtration systems for Tribal residences. The units were installed in 2012 and have been successful at removing arsenic. The filters are Point-Of-Use units, designed to meet compliance under the Safe Drinking Water Act. The units have addressed the arsenic levels, and also the secondary fluoride standard exceedance, and sulfide taste and odor problems. The water system is in full compliance.

Contact: Karl Banks, 415-972-3557

